



Glasgow's Youth Justice Strategy 2010-2011



Glasgow's vision for its children and young people

The City Council and its partners are keen to ensure that the city becomes and remains a positive place to live, a place where young people are safe, nurtured, healthy, achieving, active, respected & responsible and included. The foundation for this is, of course, effective universal services for all children and young people in the city. Yet, for some of the city's more vulnerable young people, the Youth Justice Strategy forms a key stepping stone to achieving that vision, and ultimately the Scottish Government's vision of a Safer and Stronger, Wealthier and Fairer, Smarter, Healthier, Greener Scotland.

What do we mean by Youth Justice?

In the most rudimentary sense Youth Justice can simply be seen as a fair and even-handed approach in addressing young people's offending, ensuring that the punishment fits the crime. This is NOT what we mean by Youth Justice in Glasgow. Scotland's long-standing Children's Hearings System has ensured that the child's welfare is paramount, whether addressing offending or other needs, and the term 'punishment' is rarely used outside of the tabloid media in relation to young people. So what do we mean?

Youth Justice in Glasgow recognises that the vast majority of young people do not become involved in offending, and those that do rarely reoffend, even without statutory intervention. However a small number of young people do become involved in more persistent and entrenched patterns of offending behaviour. In addition it has become clear that young people who display challenging and complex behaviours may not necessarily become involved in offending, yet display similar needs and risks to those that young people who do offend.

So Youth Justice in Glasgow is about ensuring that young people who display difficult and challenging behaviours, including offending, are given the supports and opportunities required to remain safely in the community, to change their behaviour, to reduce their vulnerability and to make positive choices for the future.

Who do we mean by Youth Justice?

Youth Justice is traditionally seen as an area for Social Work, the Police and the Children's Hearings System (or the Courts). These agencies are some of the key players in Youth Justice in Glasgow, however the multi-agency Youth Justice Strategy Group also incorporates attendees from all agencies who have an interest in improving lives for children and young people. The full list of members is:

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Social Work• Strathclyde Police• Scottish Children's Reporters Administration• Procurator Fiscal• Culture and Sport Glasgow• Health | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Education Services• Children's Panel• Voluntary Sector• Glasgow Community & Safety Services• Community Justice Authority• Glasgow Addictions Services |
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All of these agencies share joint responsibility for implementing the Youth Justice Strategy and ensuring that Glasgow's young people achieve the best outcomes in life.

How will the Youth Justice Strategy Group achieve its aims?

There has been a sizeable shift in national Youth Justice policy to focus efforts and resources on early intervention, prevention and diversion, as set out in *Reducing Offending by Young People: A Framework for Action*. The Getting it Right for Every Child (GIRFEC) approach also means that every relevant agency has a responsibility to share information and work together for the benefit of children and young people. Glasgow welcomes these changes in emphasis, as it is clear that tackling problems before they become entrenched is the most effective and cost-efficient way to change behaviour. Indeed the city is keen to focus its attention in this way, and has introduced a staged-model of service provision to ensure that all young people receive the service that they require at the appropriate time.

However the city also recognises that a small number of young people will have complex needs and risks that will require more focused and intensive service provision. As such the Youth Justice Strategy is concerned with the uppermost two stages of service provision for those highest risk and most vulnerable young people. These services include Youth Justice Social Work Teams, the development of Learning Centres to support young people with complex needs in mainstream education placements, Cognitive Behavioural Programmes designed to reduce offending, Forensic Mental Health, The Intensive Support and Monitoring Service and other Intensive Services, Multisystemic Therapy, Treatment Foster Care plus Includem and other voluntary partners.

These services are all coordinated via the Youth Justice Strategy Group and are committed to providing high-quality community-based services that are influenced by the latest evidence about ‘what works?’ in reducing offending and other challenging behaviours. Only where community-based alternatives fail, or are deemed too risky, will residential and secure placements will be sought as the research findings are unambiguous that these high-cost, low-result resources are not the best way to change behaviour or spend public money. Although these services form the main focus of the Youth Justice Strategy Group, there is also recognition that services provided lower down the staged model have a key role in preventing and diverting young people from becoming involved in offending, and in addressing behavioural problems before they become more serious and challenging. These services can improve outcomes for young people and reduce the burden on youth justice services further up the scale. Thus in order to reflect the importance of a wide range of service provision the prevention and diversionary service providers such as Glasgow Community & Safety Services and Culture & Sport Glasgow are represented on the Strategy Group, and there are clear links with other planning groups with responsibility for early intervention through the Children’s Services Planning structures.

What exactly does the Youth Justice Strategy Group plan to do?

The Youth Justice workplan for the city is designed to ensure that the strategic plan is effectively implemented. This means ensuring that everyone involved in Youth Justice in the city believes in and understands the vision, and is given the appropriate skills and training to adhere to this in their own practice.

Many of the Youth Justice services provided in the city have been evaluated to ensure that they are effective, for example Youth Justice teams, the Intensive Support & Monitoring Service, Local Youth Justice Forums and the Programmes Team. These services will continue as they have been proven to work, but developments will be implemented where necessary to ensure that these services become the best that they can be. New services that were implemented last year such as Multisystemic Therapy and the Intensive Support and Monitoring: Alternative to Remand services will be thoroughly evaluated this year to establish whether they are effective and to ensure that the services are an efficient use of public funds.

The city will also make sure that all types of young people receive the most appropriate service to meet their needs. As such it will review and, where necessary, improve services provided to young people displaying challenging behaviours or involved in offending who:

- Have a learning difficulty or disability
- Are young women
- Misuse substances

- Are making the transition from child to adult services

In addition the Youth Justice Strategy Group has long recognised the benefits of intervening at the earliest appropriate point in young people's lives. In order to ensure that this happens consistently across the city, the Youth Justice Strategy Group has been involved in the development of Early and Effective Intervention Groups (EEI). These multi-agency groups, chaired by Glasgow Community & Safety Services, will meet regularly to discuss young people who have picked up a small number of offences. The purpose of these groups is to ensure that a swift response to the offence is made and that young people and their families receive any advice, support and guidance that they might need in order to divert young people away from further offending.

For example, a young person may simply receive a written warning about their offence, they may be linked in to Culture and Sport Glasgow to ensure that they are making positive use of their leisure time or those young people that are beginning to get more involved with offending may receive a structured programme designed to address their offending. However where appropriate the EEI Groups may also decide to take no formal action and leave the family to deal with their child's behaviour, especially for first-time or very low-level offences. The EEI Groups will also have the option to refer the young person to the Children's Reporter should they feel that the young person or family may not co-operate, or where there are concerns about the levels of risk and need that the child faces. The Early and Effective Intervention Groups will be established in each local area during 2010, and will be fully evaluated to ensure that they are effective.

The combination and range of these different services provides an effective evidence-based service pathway for young people, one that the city believes strongly will improve outcomes for all young people involved.

How will we know that what we are doing is effective?

The 'motto' of the Youth Justice Strategy Group has been to ensure that the city's Youth Justice Services are 'Effective, Efficient and Evidence-based'. This simply means that services achieve what they set out to do, that they do so in the most cost and resource efficient way possible and that youth justice services for the citizens of Glasgow are based on the best available research evidence, from Scotland, the UK and around the world.

The Youth Justice Strategy Group is therefore committed to continued monitoring and evaluation to ensure that services remain effective, that areas for improvement are identified at an early stage and that services are transparent and accountable: to young people, victims, communities and the public purse. To this effect there is a Research & Development Team in

Youth Justice dedicated to research, evaluation, performance monitoring, training and communications.

In addition the Youth Justice Strategy Group will publish an [Annual Report](#) each year, detailing the progress made in reducing youth offending, and outlining any new developments in the city. As part of this Youth Justice will always seek to demonstrate the following outcomes for children and young people that use its services:

- A reduction in the volume of offending
- A reduction in the seriousness of offending
- A reduction in risk (as assessed by a structured risk assessment)
- Increased involvement in education, employment or training

Youth Justice also understands the importance of communicating this information at an appropriate time and in a suitable manner to a wide range of audiences. This includes the general public, politicians and staff working with young people. As such a communication strategy has been developed to ensure that this is achieved.

Further information on Youth Justice Services is available on the Glasgow City Council website www.glasgow.gov.uk